

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4193
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHERAN
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: USEGJC, EAID, ECON, EINV
SUBJ: MINISTER OF PLANNING REPLACED

1. PRESIDENTIAL DECREE ISSUED APRIL 21 HAS IMPLEMENTED LONG-REUMORED REPLACEMENT OF MINPLAN EL IMAM BY ABDEL RAZZAK ABDEL MEQUID, PRESENTLY VICE HAIRMAN OF INVESTMENTS AUTHORITY (AND FORMER DEPMINPLAN AND THEN ADVISOR TO PM SALEM). EL IMAM HAS WANTED OUT FOR SOME TIME, AND MEQUID HAS BEEN YEARNING FOR MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO EVEN LONGER, SO BOTH INDIVIDUALS ARE PROBALBY QUITE SATISFIED. IN SECOND PRESIDENTIAL DECREE, EL IMAM HAS BEEN NAMED MEMBER OF NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PLANNING.

2. AS FAR AS EGYPT IS CONCERNED, AND FROM POINT OF VIEW OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEMBERS, MOVE IS OF POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE.
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MEQUID IS DYNAMIC, ACTION-ORIENTED, CAPABLE AND QUALIFIED ECONOMIST, WITH CONFIDENCE OF PM AND PRESIDENT AS WELL AS BANK AND FUND. HIS TASK WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, AND MINISTRY IS NOT KNOWN FOR HARD WORK OR CREATIVITY.

3. PLANNING FUNCTION IN EGYPT HAS NEVER BEEN PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL, AND IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN

ASSEMBLY OPERATION WHERE UNBRIDLED DESIRES AND NEEDS OF VARIOUS OTHER AGENCIES WERE ADDED TOGETHER IN ONE LARGE, MEANINGLESS LUMP. LACK OF CLOUT OF MINPLAN MADE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO TRIM ANY OTHER MINISTRY'S DEMANDS, CONSTANT COMPLAINT OF LAST THREE INCUMBENTS. OF CLOSELY RELATED IMPORTANCE WAS ALMOT TOTAL LACK OF DELINEATION AS TO WHERE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WANTED COUNTRY TO GO. AS EL IMAM OFTEN PUT IT, TECHNICAL OPERATION OF DRAFTING A PLAN CAN ONLY TAKE PLACE WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES WHICH THEMWLVES MUST BE DECIDED BY WHOEVER IS RUNNING THE COUNTRY. WITHOUT SUCH GUIDELINES, THERE CAN BE NO PLAN.

4. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT MEQUID HAS TAKEN JOB WITH EVERY INTENTION OF FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS AND PERHAPS EVEN EXPANDING HIS ROLE (SEE BELOW), HIS IMMEDIATE TASK IS PROBABLY TO PREPARE A DRAFT PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR MAY CG MEETING. HE WROTE GOE'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PAPER THAT IBRD IS DISTRIBUTING TO PARTICIPANT STATES, AND HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN DEVOTING A PORTION OF HIS TIME TO GETTING TOGETHER MATERIALS TO USE IN PRESENTATION TO DONOR STATES WHICH WILL GIVE A BETTER IDEA OF HOW EGYPT INTENDS TO DEAL WITH ITS PROBLEMS. THIS HAS BEEN MATTER OF GROWING CONCERN, ESPECIALLY AMONG ARABS, AND MINISTERIAL CHANGE AT THIS JUNCTURE IS PROBABLY A REFLECTION OF DISCUSSIONS EGYPTIANS HAVE HAD WITH THEM AS WELL AS OTHERS, AND A RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO PUT A BETTER FACE ON PRESENT LACK OF DIRECTION. WE DOUBT THAT MEQUID CAN WORK UP A FULL PLAN, BUT HE WILL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SOMETHING AT WHICH DONORS CAN LOOK, IN MARKED CONTRAST TO PRESENT SITUATION. EL IMAM COMPLAINED ABOUT IMPOSSIBILITY OF PRODUCING A PLAN WITHOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT DECISIONS ON HOW IT WANTED ECONOMY TO GO. MEQUID MAY BE IN BETTER POSITION SINCE IT IS PRIMARILY HIS PAPERS FOR CG-- PRESUMABLE ENDORSED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS-- WHICH COULD NOW SERVE AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR A PLAN. THUS, HE CAN BEGIN THE FORMAL PLANNING PROCESS FROM A POINT WHERE OVERALL POLICY STATEMENTS IN WHICH HE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ENUNCIATED, ADMITTEDLY STILL IN VERY GENERAL FORM.

5. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN INFORMED SPECULATION THAT SADAT INTENDS TO RESPOND TO DESIRE OF DONORS FOR REORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC MACHINERY BY CREATING SOMETHING RESEMBLING A PLAN ORGANIZATION, REPORTING TO HIM (OR TO PM, WHETHER SALEM OR A REPLACEMENT IF CABINET RESHUFFLE TAKES PLACE AS EXPECTED WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS), AND WITH BROAD MANDATE FOR PULLING THINGS TOGETHER. EXACT FORM OF ORGANIZATION, WHEN AND IF IT IS CREATED, IS UNKNOWN, BUT WE ESTIMATE THAT MEQUID WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN IT, AND WOULD PROBABLY BE QUITE EFFECTIVE.

EILTS

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Sent Date: 22-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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